Message from Janet Browne and Liz Lunbeck

Dear Graduate Students:

We appreciate your patience as we try to gather useful and up-to-date information in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. The situation is, as you know, fluid and unfolding at a very fast clip; we will undoubtedly be updating the information below as more becomes clear. The days and weeks ahead will be difficult, and we would like to be able to call on everyone’s understanding, patience, and goodwill as we make our way through them.

Below is some information you might find useful.

Science Center offices

Science Center offices will be almost completely off-limits starting Tuesday evening. Please take this opportunity to remove the research and teaching materials you will need ASAP (roller bags, anyone?). Apologies for the short notice; this is a new policy, affecting everyone (staff, faculty, grad students), following evolving city of Cambridge guidelines. See https://www.cambridgema.gov/covid19 for updates.

If you must get into the building to pick up something after this evening, please email Ellen Guarente so she can let building services know.

TFs: Courses and working remotely

As you are no doubt aware, all courses are to be offered remotely for the remainder of the semester. This week (Spring Break) is a good time to ensure that you are prepared to conduct sections on zoom. If your course instructor has not been in touch, please do reach out to them.

To teach remotely, you will need access to high-speed internet. Please discuss arrangements with your course instructor, and let them know if you do not have the necessary connections. (We had thought until yesterday that TFs would be able to teach from quiet rooms on campus, but that is no longer an option. We will update you as more information becomes available.)

All TFs who are teaching this semester (including lecture, section, office hours, help room, etc., but not anyone serving only as a grader) will be entitled to up to $125 in departmental funds for the purchase of hardware or software deemed essential for remote teaching. Audio quality
is very important for remote teaching—a Bluetooth headset might be ideal. Any equipment must be sent to your home address, and should eventually be returned to the department, assuming it remains useful for future use. These funds can also be used to upgrade your internet if necessary.

HUIT is running online training for remote teaching this week: https://huit.harvard.edu/attend

It is important that everyone works to put the elements for remote teaching in place this week. Course heads are responsible for overseeing this process and ensuring that it works correctly; Dean Bobo has reminded faculty of this. Please direct any questions you might have to Brigid and Allie. Please see the Teaching tab on this FAQs page: https://gsas.harvard.edu/coronavirus

If you are out of town or planning to leave, please inform your course instructor as well as Allie so we are aware and can help troubleshoot from afar. (And, if you plan on traveling, please consult Harvard policies: https://www.harvard.edu/coronavirus/travel-guidance)

GSAS is aware that implementing remote teaching might prove labor-intensive, and is concerned that TFs not bear the burden of this. Please forward your concerns to the DGS.

**G1s and G2s: Coursework and general exams**

As of March 16, all borrowing of print materials in Harvard Libraries has been suspended (as well as ILL and Borrow Direct); scan and deliver is also now no longer available.

Faculty are prepared to be flexible with deadlines this semester, as we realize that some of you will have lost valuable time in dealing with the day-to-day exigencies of the pandemic, others will not be able to access research materials in the ways you’d hoped, and none of us will have access to any actual books in the libraries. Faculty are prepared to be flexible with respect to deadlines; please reach out to your course instructors.

We also realize that some students may wish to postpone their general exams (for a week to a month or so; it is also possible you would want to postpone until the fall) to make up for lost time; if this is the case, please be in touch with your committee and also with the DGS. As a reminder, all exams will be conducted remotely.

Dissertation Study Day will also be conducted remotely; we may need to reschedule if students decide to postpone exams, and will keep you posted.

Linda is working from home and is available; please reach out to her with any questions, or to the DGS.
**Dissertation research**

Travel to collections, archives, sites, and interviews is now impossible, and we recognize that this will affect the progress of some-to-many students. At this point, there is no way to gauge magnitude of the problem; we will know more only when we know more of the course of the pandemic. Please be assured that GSAS is aware of the issue and of its importance and impact. Please let the DGS know of your concerns on this score.

**Health insurance, medical costs**


GSAS is aware that students may incur extra costs due to the coronavirus. Please speak with your financial aid officer should you incur burdensome extra co-pays or other medical expenses.

**International students**

Please see this letter from the Harvard International Office: [https://mailchi.mp/462a1808b38b/coronavirus-faq-for-international-students-and-scholars?e=745d8818b1](https://mailchi.mp/462a1808b38b/coronavirus-faq-for-international-students-and-scholars?e=745d8818b1)

GSAS maintains a Coronavirus guidance website; please visit for answers to general GSAS related questions: [https://gsas.harvard.edu/coronavirus](https://gsas.harvard.edu/coronavirus)

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We urge all of you to be vigilant about recommended steps to curtail the spread of COVID-19 (handwashing, not touch your face, staying home, self-quarantining if you do not feel well, and calling UHS to discuss your symptoms before going to an ER).

In closing, please do take care of yourselves and each other. We are all going through an extremely destabilizing and frightening experience, unlike anything we’ve faced before. Please do check on one another; it can be difficult to be isolating in the midst of so much turbulence. Please do reach out to one of us, to Brigid or to Linda, to your advisors and committee members, and also, if you’d like, to Counseling and Mental Health services at Harvard University Health Services: [https://camhs.huhs.harvard.edu/](https://camhs.huhs.harvard.edu/)

And, please consider joining the Coronavirus Narratives and Social History Group (covid-19-social-history-listserv), inaugurated Monday by Professor Hammonds along with Tina Wei, Udo Okwandu, and Emma Broder. Let’s share our resources and put our expertise to good use!
You will find Evelynn’s introduction to the listserv here:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JklElFjnomJUiiNlv8EMgt9c2h8dQzQXyp4bKdVGVX8/edit

Best wishes,

Liz and Janet